

Amendments to the Specification:

Please add the following new paragraph on page 1, after the Title:

Cross Reference to Related Applications

This application is a continuation of U.S. Application Serial No. 10/173,577, filed on June 18, 2002, which was a continuation of U.S. Application Serial No. 09/903,690, filed on July 13, 2001, which was a continuation of PCT international application No. PCT/IE00/00009, filed on January 17, 2000.

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

An ~~in-vitro~~ in vitro for testing the immunomodulatory especially anti-inflammatory or pro-inflammatory effect of a test material comprises placing a microporous support having a monolayer of epithelial cells therein in contact with a nutrient medium in a culture well. Cells of the immune system such as peripheral blood mononuclear cells are introduced into the medium and a test material is also introduced into the nutrient medium. A change in an immunological marker, especially a cytokine, particularly ~~TNF α~~ , TNF α or IL-8 in response to the test material is determined. The test material may be a strain of ~~Lactobacillus~~ Lactobacillus or ~~Bifidobacterium~~ Bifidobacterium or other material which may be a probiotic.

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawing includes changes to Figs. 1 – 7. These sheets, which includes Figs. 1 – 7 replace the original sheets including Figs. 1 – 7. In Figs. 1 – 7, the improper shaded areas have been amended. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is introduced by the amendment.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets
Annotated Sheets Showing Changes